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SUNDAY READING.

THE
PILGRIM'S
AN ALLEGORY.



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THE PILGRIMS, &c.

METHOUGHT I was once upon a time travelling through a certain land which was very full of people, but, what was rather odd, not one of all this multitude was at home; they were all bound to a far distant country. Though it was permitted by the Lord of the land that these Pilgrims might associate together for their present mutual comfort and convenience; and each was not only allowed, but commanded to do the other all the services he could upon their journey, yet it was decreed, that every individual traveller must enter the far country singly. There was a great gulf at the end of the journey which every one must pass alone, and at his own risk, and the friendship of the whole united world could be of no use in shooting that gulf. The exact time when each was to pass was not known to any, this the Lord always kept a close secret out of kindness, yet still they were as sure that the time must come, and that at no very great distance, as if they were informed of the very moment. Now, as they knew they were always liable to be called away at an hour's notice, one would have thought they would have been chiefly employed in packing up, preparing, and getting every thing in order. But they indeed. It was almost the only thing which they did not think about.

Now I only appeal to you, my readers, if any

you are setting out upon a little common journey,
 it is only to London or York, is not all your lei-
 sure time employed in settling your business at
 home, and packing up every little necessary for
 your expedition? And does not the fear of neglecting
 any thing you ought to remember or may have oc-
 casion for, haunt your mind, and sometimes even
 intrude upon you unseasonably? And when you
 are actually on your journey, especially if you
 have never been to that place before, or are likely
 to remain there, don't you begin to think a little
 about the pleasures and the employments of the
 place, and to wish to know a little what sort of a
 London or York is? Don't you wonder what
 is doing there, and whether you are properly qua-
 lified for the business or the company you expect
 to be engaged in? Do you never look at the map
 or consult Brookes's Gazetteer? And don't you try
 to pick up from your fellow passengers in the stage
 each any little information you can get? And
 though you may be obliged, out of civility, to
 converse with them on common subjects, yet do
 your secret thoughts still run upon London or
 York, its business, or its pleasures? And above all,
 if you are likely to set out early, are you not afraid
 of oversleeping, and does not that fear keep you
 on the watch, so that you are commonly up and
 ready before the porter comes to summon you?
 Consider! if this be your case, how surprised will
 you be to hear that the Travellers to the far coun-
 try have not half your prudence, though bound
 on a journey of infinitely more importance, to a
 place where nothing can be sent after them, and
 which when they are once settled, all errors
 are irretrievable.

I observed that these pilgrims, instead of being upon the watch, lest they should be ordered or unprepared, instead of laying up any provision or even making memorandums of what they would be likely to want, spent most of their time in crowds, either in the way of traffic or diversion. At first, when I saw them so much engaged in conversing with each other, I thought it a good sign and listened attentively to their talk, not doubting but the chief turn of it would be about the climate, or treasures, or society they should probably meet with in the far country. I supposed they might be also discussing about the best and safest road to it, and that each was availing himself of the knowledge of his neighbour, on a subject of equal importance to all. I listened to every party, but in scarcely any did I hear one word about the land to which they were bound, though it was their home, where their whole interest, expectation, and inheritance lay; to which also great part of their friends were gone before, and whether they were sure all the rest would follow. Their whole talk was about the business, or pleasures, or the fashions, of the strange country which they were merely passing through, and which they had not one foot of land which they were sure of calling their own for the next quarter of an hour. What little estate they had was *personal* and not real, and that was a mortgaged, life-holdnment of clay, not properly their own, but only lent to them on a short uncertain lease, of which three score years and ten was considered as the long period, and very few indeed lived in it to the end of the term; for this was always at the will of

Lord, part of whose prerogative it was, that he
 could take away the lease at pleasure, knock
 down the stoutest tenement at a single blow, and
 turn out the poor, shivering, helpless tenant naked,
 to that far country for which he had made no
 provision. Sometimes, in order to quicken the
 pilgrim in his preparations, the Lord would break
 down the tenement by slow degrees, sometimes he
 would let it tumble by its own natural decay, for as it
 was only built to last a certain term, it would some-
 times grow so uncomfortable by increasing dilapida-
 tions even before the ordinary lease was out, that
 the lodging was hardly worth keeping, though the
 tenant could seldom be persuaded to think so, but
 hang to it to the last. First the thatch on the top of
 the tenement changed colour, then it fell off and left
 the roof bare, then "the grinders ceased because
 they were few;" then the windows became so dark-
 ned that the owner could scarcely see through
 them, then one prop fell away, then another, then
 the uprights became bent, and the whole fabric
 trembled and tottered, with every other symptom
 of a falling house. On some occasions the Lord
 ordered his messengers, of which he had a great va-
 rity, to batter, injure, deface, and almost demolish
 the frail building even while it seemed new and
 strong; this was what the landlord called *giving*
turning; but many a tenant would not take it, and
 was so fond of staying where he was, even un-
 der all these inconveniences, that at last he was
 turned out by ejection, not being prevailed on to
 leave his dwelling in a proper manner, though one
 would have thought the fear of being turned out
 would have whetted his diligence in preparing for

a better and more enduring inheritance For though the people were only tenants at will in these crannemements, yet through the goodness of the said Lord, they were assured that he never turned them out of the habitations before he had on his part provided for them a better, so that there was not so much another landlord in the world; and though their present dwelling was but frail, being only slightly repaired up to serve the occasion, yet they might hold the future possession by a most certain tenure, the word of the Lord himself, which was entered in a covenant, or title-deed, consisting of many sheets, and because a great many good things were given away in it, a book was made of which every soul might get a copy. This indeed had not always been the case, because, till a few ages back there had been a sort of monopoly in the tale, and "the wise and prudent," that is, the cunning and fraudulent had hid these things from the "babes and sucklings," that is, from the low and ignorant, and many frauds had been practised, and the poor had been cheated of their right, so that not being allowed to read and judge for themselves, they had been sadly imposed upon; but all these tricks had been put an end to more than two hundred years when passed through the country, and the meanest man who could read might then have a copy, so that he might see himself what he had to trust to, and even those who could not read, might hear it read once or twice every week at least without pay. But I was surprised to see how few comparatively made use of these vast advantages. Of those who had a copy, many laid it carelessly by, expressed a general belief in the truth of the title-deed, a general

satisfaction that they should come in for a share of the inheritance, a *general* good opinion of the Lord whose word it was, and a *general* disposition to take his promise upon trust, always however intending at a *convenient season* to inquire farther into the matter, and this neglect of theirs was construed into a forfeiture of the inheritance.

At the end of this country lay the vast gulf mentioned before; it was shadowed over by a broad and thick cloud, which prevented the pilgrims from seeing in a distinct manner what was doing behind it, yet such beams of brightness now and then darted through the cloud as enabled those who used a telescope provided for that purpose, to see the *substance of things hoped for*; but it was not every one who could make use of this telescope; no eye indeed was *naturally* disposed to it; but an earnest desire of getting a glimpse of the invisible realities, gave such a strength and steadiness to the eye, as enabled it to discern many things which could not be seen by the natural sight. Above the cloud was this Inscription, *The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*. Of these last many glorious descriptions had been given, but as those splendors were at a distance, and as the pilgrims in general did not care to use the telescope, these distant visions made little impression. The glorious inheritance which lay beyond the cloud, was called *The things above*, while a multitude of trifling objects, which appeared contemptibly small when looked at through the telescope were called *The things below*. Now as we know it is nearness which gives size and bulk to any object, it was

not wonderful that these ill-judging pilgrims were more struck with these baubles and trifles, which by lying close at hand, were visible and tempting to the naked eye, and which made up the sum of *The things below*, than with the remote glories of *The things above*: but this was chiefly owing to their not making use of the telescope through which, if you examined thoroughly *The things below*, they seemed to shrink almost down to nothing, while *The things above* appeared the more beautiful and vast the more the telescope was used. But the surprising part of the story was this, not that the pilgrims were captivated at first sight with *The things below*, for that was natural enough, but that when they had tried them all over and over and found themselves deceived and disappointed in almost every one of them, it did not at all lessen their fondness, and they grasped at them again with the same eagerness as before. There were some gay fruits which looked alluring, but on being opened instead of a kernel they were found to contain rottenness, and those which seemed the fullest often proved on trial to be quite hollow and empty. Those which were most tempting to the eye were often found to be wormwood to the taste, or poison to the stomach, and many flowers that seemed most bright and gay had a worm gnawing at the root.

Among the chief attractions of *The things below* were certain little lumps of yellow clay, on which almost every eye and every heart was fixed. When I saw the variety of uses to which this clay could be converted, and the respect which was shewn to those who could scrape together the greatest number of pieces, I did not much wonder at the gene-

desire to pick up some of them. But when I be-
 hold the anxiety, the wakefulness, the competitions,
 contrivances, the tricks, the frauds, the scuffling,
 pushing, the turmoiling, the kicking, the shov-
 eling, the cheating, the circumvention, the envy, the
 malignity, which was excited by a desire to possess
 this article; when I saw the general scramble among
 those who had little to get much, and of those who
 had much to get more, then I could not help apply-
 ing to these people a Proverb in use among us,
gold may be brought too dear. Though I saw
 that there were various sorts of baubles which en-
 gaged the hearts of different Travellers, such as an
 ounce of red or blue ribbon, for which some were
 content to forfeit their future inheritance, commit-
 ting the sin of Esau without his temptation of hun-
 ger; yet the yellow clay I found was the grand ob-
 ject for which most hands scrambled and most souls
 were risked. One thing was extraordinary, that the
 rarer these people were to being turned out of
 their tenement, the fonder they grew of these pieces
 of clay, so that I naturally concluded they meant
 to take the clay with them to the far country; but
 soon learnt this clay was not current there, the
 Lord having declared to these pilgrims, that as
 they had brought nothing into this world, they could
 carry nothing out.

I inquired of the different people who were rais-
 ing the various heaps of clay, some of a larger,
 some of a smaller size, why they discovered such
 a remitting anxiety, and for whom? Some whose
 families were immense, told me they were heaping up
 for their children; this I thought very right, till on
 turning my eyes round, I observed many of the chil-
 dren of these very people had large heaps of their

own. Others told me it was for their grand children but on enquiry I found these were not yet born, in many cases there was little chance that they would. The truth, on a close examination, proved to be, that the true genuine heapers really heaped for themselves; that it was in fact neither for friend or child, but to gratify an inordinate appetite of their own. Nor was I much surpris'd after this to see these yellow hoards at length *canker*, and *rust* of them become a *witness* against the hoarders and eat their flesh as it were fire.

Many however who had set out with a high hope of their father's raising, before they had got a third of their journey had scarcely a single pie left. As I was wondering what had caused these enormous piles to vanish in so short a time, I spent some days scattered up and down the country all sorts of odd inventions, for some or other of which the vain possessors of the great heaps of clay had trucked and bartered them away in fewer hours than their ancestors had spent years in getting them together. O what a strange unaccountable medley it was and what was ridiculous enough, I observed that the greatest quantity of the clay was always exchanged for things that were of no use that I could discover, owing I suppose to my ignorance of the manners of that country.

In one place I saw large heaps exhausted in order to set two idle pampered horses a running but the worst part of the joke was, the horses did not run to fetch or carry any thing, but merely to let the gazers see which could run fastest. Now this gift of swiftness, exercised to no one useful purpose, was only one out of many instances of talents used to no end. In another place I

whole piles of the clay spent to maintain long
 ranges of buildings full of dogs, on provisions
 which would have nicely fattened some thousands
 of pilgrims who sadly wanted fattening, and whose
 ragged tenements were out at elbows, for want of
 a little help to repair them. Some of the piles
 were regularly pulled down once in seven years
 in order to corrupt certain needy pilgrims to be-
 tray their consciences. Others were spent in play-
 ing with white stiff bits of paper painted over
 with red and black spots, in which I thought there
 must be some conjuring, because the very touch of
 these painted pasteboards made the heaps fly from
 one to another, and back again to the same, in a
 way that natural causes could not account for.
 There was another proof that there must be some
 magic in this business, which was that if a pasteboard
 with red spots fell into a hand which wanted a black
 one, the person changed colour, his eyes flashed
 out, and he discovered other symptoms of madness,
 which showed there was some witchcraft in the case.
 These clean little pasteboards, as harmless as they
 looked, had the wonderful power of pulling down
 the highest piles in less time than all the other
 causes put together. I observed many small piles
 were given in exchange for an enchanted liquor,
 which when the purchaser had drank to a little ex-
 cess, he lost all power of managing the rest of his
 property without losing the love of it.
 Now I found it was the opinion of sober pilgrims,
 that either hoarding the clay or trucking it for any
 other purposes as the above, was thought exactly
 the same offence in the eyes of the Lord, and it
 was expected that when they should come under
 more immediate jurisdiction in the far country,

the penalty annexed to hoarding and squandering would be nearly the same. While I examined the countenances of the owners of the heaps, I observed that those who I well knew never intended to make any use at all of their heap, were more terrified at the thought of losing it, or of being torn from it, than those were who were employing it in the most useful manner. Those who knew what to do with it, set their hearts least upon it, and were always most willing to leave it. But such riddles were common in this odd country.

Now I wondered why these Pilgrims, who were naturally made erect with an eye formed to look up to *The things above*, yet had their eyes almost constantly bent in the other direction rivetted to the earth, and fastened on *things below*, just like those animals who walk on all four. I was told they had not always been subject to this weakness of sight and proneness to earth: That they had originally been upright and beautiful, having been created after the image of the Lord who was himself the perfection of beauty, that he had placed them in a far superior situation which he had given them in perpetuity, but that their first ancestors fell from it through pride and carelessness; that upon this the freehold was taken away, they lost their original strength, brightness and beauty, and were driven out into this strange country; where however they had every opportunity given them of recovering their health, and the Lord's favour and likeness, for they were become so disfigured, and were grown so unlike him, that you would hardly believe they were his own children, though, in some the resemblance was become again visible. The Lord, however, was so merciful, that instead

ving them up to the dreadful consequences of
 their own folly, as he might have done without any
 impeachment of his justice, he gave them immedi-
 ate comfort, and promised them, that in due time,
 his own Son should come down and restore them
 the future inheritance which he should purchase
 for them. And now it was that in order to keep up
 their spirits, after they had lost their estate through
 the folly of their ancestors, that he began to give
 them a part of their former Title Deed. He con-
 tinued to send them portions of it from time to
 time by different faithful servants, whom, however,
 these ungrateful people generally used ill, and
 some of whom they murdered. But for all this
 the Lord was so very forgiving, that he at length
 sent these mutineers a Proclamation of full and free
 pardon by his Son, who, though they used him in
 a more cruel manner than they had done any of
 his servants, yet after having finished the work his
 Father had given him to do, went back into the
 country to prepare a place for all them who
 believe in him; and there he still lives, begging
 and pleading for those unkind people whom he
 loves and forgives, and will restore to the
 purchased inheritance on the easy terms of their
 being heartily sorry for what they have done, tho-
 ghly desirous of pardon and convinced that *He*
is able and willing to save to the utmost all them that
repent unto him. He saw indeed that many old offenders appeared
 to be sorry for what they had done; that is, they did
 not like to be punished for it. They were willing
 enough to be delivered from the penalty of their
 sins, but they did not heartily wish to be delivered
 from the power of it. Many declared, in the most

public manner, once every week, that they were very sorry they had done amiss; but it was not enough to *declare* their sorrow ever so often, they gave no other sign of their penitence. For there was so little truth in them, that the Lord required other proofs of their sincerity beside their own word, for they often lied with their lips and dissembled with their tongue. But those who professed to be penitents were neither allowed to raise heaps of clay, by circumventing their neighbours, or to have great piles lying by them useless, nor must they barter them for any of these idling vanities, which reduced the heaps on a sudden; for I found that among the grand articles of future reckoning, the use they had made of the heap would be a principal one.

I was sorry to observe many of the fairer part of these Pilgrims spend too much of their heap in adorning and beautifying their tenements with clay, in painting, and white washing, and enamelling them. All those tricks, however, did not preserve them from decay, and when they grew old they even looked worse for all this cost and vanity. Some, however, acted a more sensible part, and spent no more upon their mouldering tenements than just to keep them whole and clean, and in good repair, which is what every tenant ought to do; and I observed that those who were most careful in the care of their own tenements, were most attentive to repair and warm the ragged tenements of others. But none did this with much zeal or acceptance, but those who had acquired a habit of overlooking the *things below*, and also by the constant use of the Telescope, had got their natural weakness and dim sight so strengthened, as to be able to do

they were pretty distinctly the nature of the *things above*.
 was the habit of fixing their eyes on these glories,
 often made all the shining trifles which composed the
 nce. For the *things below* at last appear in their own
 Lord in miniature littleness. For it was in this case parti-
 cularly true, that things are only big or little by
 comparison; and there was no other way of mak-
 ing the *things below* appear as small as they really
 were, but by comparing them by means of the Tele-
 scope with the *things above*. But I observed that
 the false judgment of the Pilgrims ever kept pace
 with their wrong practices, for those who kept their
 eyes fastened on the *thing below*, were reckoned
 in their generation, while the few who look-
 ed forward to the future glories, were account-
 ed by the bustling or heapers, to be either fools
 or mad.

Well—most of these Pilgrims went on in adorn-
 ments of their tenements, adding to their heaps, grasp-
 ing the *things below* as if they would never let
 them go, shutting their eyes instead of using their te-
 lescope, and neglecting their Title Deed, as if it was
 a Parchment of another man's estate and not their
 own; till one after another each felt his tenement
 trembling about his ears.—Oh! then what a busy,
 bustling, anxious, terrifying, distracting moment was
 that! What a deal of business was to be done, and
 at a strange time was this to do it in! Now to
 the confusion and dismay occasioned by having
 every thing to the last minute. First some
 was sent for to make over the yellow heaps to
 another, which the heaper now found would be of
 use to himself in shooting the gulf; a transfer
 which ought to have been made while the tenement
 was sound. Then there was a consultation between

two or three masons at once, perhaps to try to
 up the walls, and strengthen the props, and stop
 decays of the tumbling tenement; but not till
 masons were forced to declare it was past repair
 (a truth they were rather too apt to keep back)
 the tenant seriously think it was time to
 up, prepare, and begone. Then what sending
 the wise men who professed to explain the
 Deed! And oh, what remorse that they had
 lected to examine it till their senses were too
 fused for so weighty a business! What reproaches
 or what exhortations to others to look better at
 their own affairs! Even to the wisest of the
 bitants the falling of their tenements was a solemn
 thing; solemn but not surprising; they had
 been packing up and preparing; they praised the
 Lord's goodness that they had been suffered to
 so long; many acknowledged the mercy of the
 frequent warnings, and confessed that those ve
 dilapidations which had made the house uncom
 table had been a blessing, as it had set them
 diligent preparation for their future inheritance
 had made them more earnest in examining their
 to it, and had set them on such a frequent applic
 tion to the telescope, that *The things above*
 seemed every day nearer and nearer. These
 fired not to be *uncloathed* but to be *cloathed*
 for they knew that if their *frail Tabernacle* was
salved they had *an house not made with hands, eternal*
in the heavens.

THE END.